

When the Going Gets Tough, Part 2 - Romans 7:20-25 – March 4th, 2012

- Today's teaching is part two of a series I've titled; "When the Going Gets Tough." I'm sure you can fill in the blanks with the rest of how it goes.
- By way of both review and introduction, I was able to identify three truths from the remainder of chapter seven, which Lord willing we'll complete.
- Last week we looked at our first one found in verses fifteen through nineteen, and in so doing caught a glimpse of a very candid Apostle Paul.

1. I'm enabled to fight the battle (Verses 15-19)

- Paul says I don't understand what I do because I don't do what I want to do. I do what I hate to do. I don't do the good I want, but the evil I don't.
- Paul's brutal battle begs the question of why is this so? Why am I unable to do the good I want, and instead I'm able to do the evil I don't want?
- The simple answer is the sinful nature. I'm unable because the sin that is living in me is rotten through and through. There's nothing good in me.

- Yes, the law, which I agree is good, is given to me, but the law cannot do anything for me. The law cannot enable me to do what I want to do.
- It's for this reason Paul says what he says. This is precisely Paul's point; the law disables me in battle. Well, pray tell, what then enables me?
- It's not the "what" of the law that enables me, it's "Who" fulfilled the law. He enables me to fight the battle and He empowers me to win the war.

2. I'm empowered to win the war (Verses 20-23)

(20) Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. (21) So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. (22) For in my inner being I delight in God's law; (23) but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

-v20 Paul says that, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, rather, it is sin, which is living in me, that is actually the one doing it.

-v21-22 He says how he finds this law at work and evil is right there with him every time he wants to do good, even though delights in God's law.

-v23 He sees yet another law working in the members of his body waging war against the law of his mind making him a prisoner of the law of sin.

- At first glance it almost sounds as if Paul's excusing sin rather than explaining sin. He is seemingly abdicating his complicity and responsibility.
- However, upon further examination it becomes clear this is not what Paul is saying. Notice he says the members of his body are waging war.
- In other words, this waging war is raging on, and it will continue on as long as we're in these wretched bodies of death and the sin nature with it.

Charles Spurgeon - "Such is our complex condition. We are new creatures, but the old man struggles within us to get the mastery. ...The new I sins not, but the old nature is sin, and remains what it always was."

3. I'm imparted to have the victory (Verses 24-25)

(24) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (25) Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

- v24 You can feel the total and utter frustration when the Apostle says; "what a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"
- v25 He thanks God through Christ saying, so then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.
- It's here that I wish to spend the remainder of our time together in God's Word. Here's why, Paul unveils the key to victory in our Christianity.

- Let me explain, when Paul says "Who" not "what" shall deliver me from this body of death, he is delineating between imitation and impartation.
- The distinction between imitation and impartation is that imitation can only give to me the "what," whereas impartation will do for me the "how."
- The best illustration of imitation as opposed to impartation I've ever heard is that of trying to imitate a famous artist, and duplicate his painting.

- No matter how hard I try, any imitation of the artist, will always fall miserably short of the impartation of that artist doing it through me instead.
- Rather than my frustrated and failed attempts at the imitating of him, I have the imparting of him. He lives inside of me, and does it for me.
- I need the impartation of the Holy Spirit to do it in me, to do it through me, and perhaps more importantly, to do it instead of me, for the victory.

Charles Spurgeon - "This is the believer's riddle... on the one hand he agonizes, and on the other hand he triumphs. Loathing sin and glorying in Christ are our daily experience. Groaning after holiness, and finding it in Jesus we both sigh and sing, repent and rejoice, fight and conquer. This is not a past, but a present experience, and he is a true heir of heaven who feels it within. ...He who comprehends the struggle of the seventh chapter is the man to enjoy the blessed elevation of the eighth chapter. It is well to experience in due order the truths which God reveals, indeed they cannot be rightly known except in their relation the one to the other."

- Lord willing, next week we'll make a seamless transition into chapter eight, having completed chapter seven which should be studied together.
- Be that as it may, at least for now anyway, I cannot think of a better way end with the partaking together of communion, at the Lord's Table.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NKJV (23) For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; (24) and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (25) In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." (26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.